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J. Miller

THE

VOICE OF THE LORD:

A SERMON PREACHED IN

CHRIST CHURCH, GEORGETOWN, D. C.

ON THE SUNDAY AFTER THE LATE MELANCHOLY
CATASTROPHE ON BOARD THE U. S.
STEAM SHIP PRINCETON

BY THE

REV STEPHEN G. GASSAWAY,

RECTOR OF THE CHURCH.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST

WASHINGTON:
ALEXANDER AND BARNARD, PRINTERS.
1844.

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In compliance with a request signed by the members of the Vestry and other members of the congregation to which he ministers, the author has been induced to permit the publication of this discourse. It was, of necessity, hastily prepared, and preached for the most part extemporaneously, and of course without any view to publication. In endeavoring, at the request of those whose judgment he respects, and for whom he feels so much affection, to recall it and reduce it to writing for the press, he has tried to adhere faithfully to the language and expressions employed in its delivery. He trusts that this may help to excuse the deficiencies in its style, and its rather diffusive length. He will only add that a part omitted in the delivery, has been inserted, in the hope that as it may be seen by some who were not present when it was preached, it may, by God's blessing, do good to a wider circle than it could otherwise have reached. That it may be so much honored of God, as to be made instrumental in impressing His sacred truth savingly upon even one heart, is the highest ambition, the most exalted wish which the author cherishes, in giving his unpretending effort to the world.

Georgetown, D. C., *March*, 1844.

SERMON.

"Be still, and know that I am God."—*Psalm* 46 : 10.

The topic on which we must speak to you this morning, beloved brethren, seems too clearly and emphatically indicated, to be passed by. God opens before us two sources of knowledge of Himself and His will, the events of His Providence, the word of His Grace. Emanating from the same author, these two volumes are coincident in their teachings, and often, when read side by side, throw light each upon the other. And therefore, the minister of God, who desires to be wise in winning souls and faithful in declaring God's whole counsel, while he draws the truths he proclaims chiefly, as he is bound, from the revealed Word, will yet fix an observant eye upon the other and study its intimations. Thus full often will he gather lessons of sacred wisdom to impart to those who hear him, or learn what truths of Holy Writ, rather than others, should be dwelt upon. In so doing he will be following the example of his Divine Master, whose instructions were usually based upon passing events, and adapted to the circumstances in which his hearers were at the moment.

But there are periods when this course, always the minister's privilege, becomes his high and imperious duty. There are events which cannot be passed by in silence. There are events which force themselves upon the attention of all, events so solemn, so marked, so impressive, that they arrest the most careless and unreflecting, impress the most frivolous and the most hardened, and compel the most unthinking and unbelieving to acknowledge the hand of the Almighty.

In such circumstances we are at this moment placed. The awful catastrophe of last week, which has been so

much in all our minds, and so saddened all our hearts, is an event of this class. Whether we consider its sudden and terrible character, the amount of suffering and death it has caused, the elevated stations of those whom it has swept away, or the wonderful Providential circumstances connected with it; whether we look at it in its national, social, or individual bearings, it has unprecedented claims to our thoughtful, solemn attention. It is an event which comes *home to us* no less than to others. We are interested in it —as citizens of this nation, whose government has been so sorely stricken; as connected with yonder city, which it has clothed in mourning;—as members of this congregation, of which, one honored family, in desolation and anguish, is mourning a fondly cherished member, and another in silent awe and trembling thankfulness is rejoicing that its head and earthly stay, with others who are among us as guests and sojourners, was snatched as by miracle from the very jaws of death.

Thus pressing itself upon our attention it would be wrong, if it were possible, to let this solemn event pass by us unimproved and unnoticed. We were "like the brutes that perish" could we do so. Were it only that we might comply with the inspired precept, and "rejoice with those who do rejoice and weep with those who weep," it would claim, at least, passing notice.

But we have higher duties in connexion with it than even this. "When thy judgments are in the earth," saith the prophet, "the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." That they may do so, are they sent, and it is our privilege to use them for the purpose. To endeavor to draw from the present occurrence its high instruction, is our present aim.

We are aware of the danger in our way. Our Blessed Savior cautions us against certain inferences which many are too apt to draw from like awful events. "Those eighteen," said He on a similar occasion, "those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all the men that dwell at Jerusalem? I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." We are not permitted to draw any conclusion as to the character or deservings of those who fall in such a calamity. But we are bound to consider such events as

warnings to the living, and to draw such inferences from them as concern ourselves, and are calculated to lead us in the ways of righteousness. And such is the light in which we view the event before us. It is the voice of the Lord to the living. We seem to hear him speaking in it to the nation, to the votaries of pleasure and power, to those immediately concerned in the accident, to ourselves, in tones of mingled sternness and tenderness, "*Be still, and know that I am* GOD."

1. But are we correct in the assumption with which we set out, that this hath been a special act of God,—that His hand hath been in it,—and that therefore it is to be considered a special admonition from Him? We cannot doubt it for a moment. Undoubtedly natural causes were at work. The ordinary laws of matter were in full and uncontrolled operation, and in obedience to them, was the engine of death burst asunder, and its massive fragments hurled abroad with such destructive violence. The ordinary laws of mind were also in operation, working out their accustomed results. The natural pride of the gallant officer who commanded that noble vessel, and after whose suggestions, that tremendous weapon had been constructed, the natural desire, which as a courteous host, he felt to afford his distinguished guests every opportunity of gratifying their curiosity; the natural desire which these latter felt to see for themselves, the truth of the wondrous things which they had heard of the vessel and her novel armament, the sense of duty which impelled some of those in official stations to test the value of those new improvements thoroughly—these all were at work, as in every similar case they might be, and it was in obedience to them, that the little group were gathered on the fated spot where destruction awaited them. Yet God was there.—These were but the ministers of His will, and through them He was working out His own mighty and inscrutable designs.

Such must be our view of the event, if we regard it in the light of Holy Writ. There we are told that God is the *governor* as well as the Creator of this world; that He orders every particular event which occurs, as well as the general movement, and the grand results in this world's history. The Scriptures tell us that He not only "doeth

according to his will in the army of Heaven," but "among the inhabitants of the earth" also;—that "His Kingdom ruleth over all,"—that while He "measureth the Heavens with a span," and "bringeth out their host by number and calleth them by their names," guiding the planets in their rapid flight, He at the same time numbereth "the very hairs of our head," and suffereth not even the sparrow to fall to the ground without Him. "I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal." "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." And if this be so in ordinary affairs, how much more in great ones, affecting the happiness and welfare of nations. "Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it." "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the Heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth Princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity."

My brethren, Holy Scripture is full of the like declarations, declarations which fully authorize, nay, which compel the conclusion that the hand of God was specially in this thing. And it is a conclusion which the many wonderful Providences connected with the event, serve very deeply to impress upon our minds. It is the Lord who hath spoken. Let us in humble submission contemplate his "strange work." And believing that He doeth nothing in vain, let us ponder the mysterious characters of blood and flame, and the dread accents of thunder and of wailing, in which His solemn message is conveyed.

2. It is "the voice of the Lord" to this whole people. The Highest hath spoken to this nation, *as a nation*. To *it*, in its collective capacity is the word of this admonition sent.

This we gather from every circumstance connected with the calamity. We read it in the official station of the sufferers. Had these men, whose loss we so deeply deplore, been all merely private individuals, then, however, high their standing in worth or fame, this awful dispensation had been only of private interpretation, its lessons only of individual application. But when we remember that two of them were officers of the general government, holding executive stations of an importance only second to the high-

est; when we remember that but for an all but miraculous interposition, even the President and at least another high executive officer had also fallen:—when we remember that it occurred on board a national vessel, and that the instrument which struck the fatal blow, had been forged for national defence;—we cannot but regard the event as having a national bearing. In these circumstances, we discover, as it were, the superscription, easily read and not to be mistaken, which points out the destination of the Heavenly admonition.

God judges nations *here*. *They* have no hereafter to which the just rewards of their conduct can be postponed. But here, in the present dispensation of his Providence, he deals out to them the righteous retributions, the rewards and the punishments which their good or evil demands at His hand. When "with rebukes" he would "chasten them for sin," He accomplishes his designs, either by sending general distress among the whole people, or by smiting their rulers. In both these ways has He chastened us. For years, as we all so well know, general disaster and depression have been among us, which seemed to palsy our energies and eat out our wealth. Now His hand is falling upon the heads of the nation, and "taking them away in his wrath." It is not the first time that He hath done so. Within the last three years, how many holding the highest official stations, have been suddenly called from their posts of honor and of usefulness, to render up their account. Harrison, Macomb, Legaré,—a President, a commander-in-chief, an Attorney General and Acting Secretary of State,—an extraordinarily large number of both Houses of Congress,—these have been the shining marks upon which the bolts have fallen in that brief space. And now we are called to mourn the vacancy of two most important stations in the Cabinet,—a Secretary of State, snatched away at an hour when his country most needed his services, a Secretary of the Navy, called from his post of duty, ere the bright anticipation of his usefulness so sanguinely entertained by his friends, and by him who placed him there, were realized.

And what is the lesson which these severe chastisements are to teach? Dull indeed were our minds, brethren, blind indeed our stupidity if we could not read it. Look

where the levin-bolt hath alighted, and see for what we are chastened. We have been stricken in those things in respect to which we most sinned. We have become an idolatrous people. True, we have not by public act, disowned Jehovah, and set up carved images and bowed down before them. But we have given our souls up to "covetousness, which is idolatry." The inordinate thirst for wealth has been the all absorbing feeling of the nation's heart;—how to get, and increase riches, the all absorbing thought in the nation's mind. Beside this, all other things have seemed to dwindle to insignificance. By this, have all the agitation and change and revolution which have lately shaken our country from centre to circumference, been aroused.—By their bearings upon this, have all the great political questions of the day been decided. Is a great measure proposed, none asks is it just? is it right? is it such as will meet God's approval? but—what are its bearings on the wealth of the country? will it enable us to get rich faster? Never was there a nation more idolatrous of money than ourselves. And there hath God smitten us. Our plans have been frustrated; panic and distrust have walked abroad in the land; our commercial energies have been paralysed; our credit abroad has been destroyed; our domestic industry gone without its reward. And the fortunes which it had been a life-long labor to accumulate, have melted away like frost work in the sun.

We have become *forgetful of God.* Once we recognized Him as the King and Ruler of nations. When our fathers asserted our national independence, they appealed to Him as the Supreme Ruler of the universe, for the rectitude of their intentions. Through the long struggle of the revolution, they acknowledged Him as the God of battles; they humbled themselves before Him in their adversity, and rejoiced unto Him in their successes. The foundations of our constitution were laid amid prayer to Him, for guidance and blessing. And for a time it was administered with a regard to His will, and His approval. But alas! other views at length prevailed; another spirit leavened the public mind. We have become *infidel in politics.* We have thought to carry on our government safely and prosperously, to secure the nation's happiness and welfare without Him. And we have forgotten His laws, the laws which

He prescribed to nations as well as individuals. We have oppressed the weak, who dwelt securely by us. We have defrauded the strong whom we could not and dared not oppress. Violence hath been heard in our land, and gone unchecked and unrebuked. Yea, even our Senators and Legislators, the very law-makers for the nation, have countenanced, have themselves indulged in, resort to violence and bloodshed. Impurity and licentiousness are fearfully rife in the land :—even in yonder Capitol and among men, from whose stations and whose talents, the country had a right to look for examples of morality and purity. We have desecrated God's Sabbaths. They have been violated both by authority, and by men in official stations needlessly encroaching on its hallowed hours for the transaction of official business. And for these things God hath visited us in judgment.

But above all, God, as the ruler of men, and the source of national prosperity, has been entirely forgotten by us. We have forgotten that obedience to His will alone exalteth a nation, that transgression of His laws is a disgrace to any people. We have looked to men for our political salvation. We have trusted in their integrity and financial skill and statesmanship, as our refuge and defence. So was it, when three years ago the revered and lamented Harrison was called by the voice of so large a portion of his fellow citizens to the highest office in their gift. With what idolatrous confidence did many regard him. How did the whole people look to him as the source whence was to come their help. How did the eyes of the nation turn to him as to the pole-star of their safety. How did their eager ears wait to catch the accents that should fall from his lips, as the oracles which solve the vexed problem, and point out the path of renewed prosperity. But God took him. A little month of office barely rolled by, and before any of these hopes could be fulfiled, he was called to give up the account of his stewardship. He died, it may be, at a period most fortunate for himself, for to him, even in his felicitous position, "to die was gain." But it was a heavy and sore rebuke for the country, a grievous chastisement.

But we have in no wise profited by the lesson. We are at this very moment manifesting the same spirit of blind confidence in men. Negociations with another mighty nation of the earth, of great importance to us, had just begun.

If conducted ably and skillfully, they might result in immense advantages to us. If unsuccessful they might terminate in all the horrors of war. For the former result the nation was looking, and depending on the wisdom and skill of him who should conduct those negociations on our part. In case of the latter result, so much to be dreaded and deplored, oh how generally was reliance built upon those improvements in naval warfare, of which that gallant vessel was the first example, to be the right arm of our defence. And where, in all the reference that was made to these, was any allusion to the existence of a God, who holdeth the hearts of rulers in his hand, and who giveth the victory not always to the strong, but defendeth the right? And God hath shown us how "vain is the help of man." The able negociator is no more, the head of our navies sleeps beside him; and the novel engine of death, instead of dealing destruction to our foes has swept away our defenders.

But above all are we not just about plunging once more into all the violence and turmoil of party strife? Already do we behold on every hand the mustering of the political clans for the battle. Already the various watch-words, and fierce war cries of the discordant factions come to our ears on every breeze. Again are men ranging themselves around their chosen leaders, bowing before them as the idols of their trust, and looking to them, and no higher than to them, for a restoration of prosperity. Such a blind confidence is felt and expressed in these men, hopes for good results are so entirely and exclusively fixed on their success, to the entire losing sight of the fact that they can but be at best the instruments in *God's* hands for good, that the language addressed by all the great political parties to their favorite leaders, is in spirit, if not in word, the same as that of Israel of old to their idols, "*Save us, for ye are our gods!*"

Amid all this wild confusion and uproar, the Lord hath lifted up his voice, "Yea, and that a mighty voice." How solemn and impressive the lesson which he has just taught us. To all this storm, and strife, and madness, he has uttered the command, "Be still." To our people thus beginning to be tossed and fretted to fury in this most disastrous civil strife, he has said, "Be still!" "Be still, and know that I am GOD." "Know that I rule among the nations of the earth: I kill and I make alive, I exalt and I cast

down. Nations hang upon me, as individuals do. When I frown upon them they wither and decline, and vain are the statesman's skill, and the warrior's might. When I smile upon them they prosper and flourish, and only then. Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his aim. For all flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, when the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is grass. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man, yea, it is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in princes. Man fleeth like a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. I the Lord faint not, neither am weary. The word of the Lord endureth forever. Here then is a firm and everlasting foundation on which ye may build, broad and high the superstructure of national prosperity. Take the sure and tried principles of my Word for your political guidance. Obey them. Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. Turn unto me with all your heart, and repent of your iniquities. Make you a clean heart and a right spirit, and put away from you all your abominations. Then shall ye once more be my people and I will once more be your God. Then shall prosperity attend you. Then shall ye be safe from all storms which shall assail you from abroad, and from all commotions and evils which may arise at home. The Eternal God shall be your refuge, and underneath you the Everlasting Arms. Then who shall be like thee, O nation saved of the Lord."

Such seems the purport of the solemn admonition which the country has received. Oh! that it might enter into our ears and sink down into our hearts. Oh! that he would send His Gracious Spirit with it, as the tidings are carried on every breeze, and cause it to graven upon the hearts of our people. And oh, that they might be moved to consider this, to remember and turn unto God, and endeavor to discharge their *duties as citizens*. in His fear.

3. But it is not alone for our country, that this calamity has a voice. In it God hath also spoken, to the gay world, the lovers of pleasure, the aspirants for power and place. Its application to that portion of society cannot escape notice, or be mistaken. It was in the very midst of such the bolt

fell. Its devastations were among those who ride upon the topmost wave of pleasure, among those who were most successful in climbing to the high places of the earth. All the circumstances combine to render it a fearfully impressive lesson to the giddy thousands, who in hot pursuit of those painted and gilded bubbles, earthly pleasure and earthly renown, forget their God and their immortal souls.

The night before the sad event, the windows of the President's Mansion gleamed with light. Within its halls was gathered the gaiety and the talent, the wit and beauty, the grace and loveliness of the Capital. And amid the festive throng moved in the pride of manly strength and in the fulness of health, some of those we this day mourn: gay as the gayest there, and as full of life and buoyant hope.

The very expedition on which the catastrophe occurred, was, as you know, a party of pleasure. And the light heartedness of many was increased by the prospect of many more such scenes of enjoyment. All hearts on board that wondrous vessel, were light and gay. Smiles sat on every face. The banquet and the song, the sportive jest and merry laugh were the occupations of the hour. All was mirth and joyousness, and it may be, many a heart there, seemed to realize, as the moments speeded by, the beautiful thought of the poet, that

> ——"Time himself in flitting by,
> Made music with his wings."

No care, no thoughtfulness was there to mar the genial spirit of the hour. God was forgotten. Death was unthought of, judgment was undreamed of, eternity was far away from their minds. Had any spoken of such topics, how strange and repulsive and out of place had it seemed. Away with such gloomy thoughts! what business have they here at such an hour?

But ah! in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, death came into their midst on wings of fire—unbidden, but importunate guest, sudden and unlooked for, as lightning from a cloudless sky—and away to judgment—away to eternity, hath he hurried the goodliest and gayest there.—In that brief moment,—briefer space than it requires to tell it, all that mirth is changed to mourning, the music to wailing; and instead of the gladsomeness that but now was universal there, is nought but horror and dismay, the

shrieks and agonies, and wild despair of wives and children bereaved forever of their earthly stay. I cannot, I would not if I could. picture to you that heart-rending scene, as we have had it from the lips of those who beheld it, themselves snatched by scarcely less than a miracle from the jaws of destruction.

And yesterday—the same hall was decked again—but for a far different occasion. The same persons as at that festive scene it had so lately witnessed, were gathered there again, but ah! how changed. Four of that gay throng are now extended mangled, and cold and stiff.—Their noble forms are wrapped in the habiliments of death, and upon them rests the sable pall or the flag of their country. And the rest, how bowed, and stricken do they seem. The only sounds that fill that lofty room, are the words of Holy Writ, the fervent prayer, the fervid exhortation, as God's ministers are performing the solemn funeral rites, and speaking in His name to the living. And then—the long procession winding its way to the spot where sleep the nation's mighty dead, the dirge-like music and the muffled drum, the tolling bells and pealing minute-guns, telling of the universal sorrow,—and this is all of their honors and their greatness. "How are the mighty fallen, how are the weapons of war perished."

And is there not in all this a most solemn admonition to the gay? Is there not in it a severe and startling rebuke to the lovers of pleasure and of power? Is there not in it a voice of fearful warning? We speak not now of it, as indicating any special sinfulness connected with the peculiar occasion when the event occurred. We speak of its apparent reference to that entire course of life, of which this was but a part and the most innocent part. We regard it as a rebuke of that giddy and dissipated existence, that continued, fevered round and whirl of pleasure and excitement, which, alas! too many lead around us, of which, alas! we have seen so much this winter—a life whose maddening excitement has been increasing in its violence, even with accelerated velocity during this sacred season, as if in defiance of the frequent calls to prayer and self-abasement, which have been echoing in their ear. Oh, it is such a continued, such an utter forgetfulness of God; it is a life so completely answering the Apostle's declaration, that "Whoso liveth in pleasure

is dead while she liveth,"—that we cannot but exclaim in view of this awful event, addressing ourselves to those who so eagerly plunge in its vortex, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Yes! to all such it is a loud and emphatic call. To them God speaks in it the solemn words of our text,—"Be still, and know that I am God." Cease this giddy round, cease this hot pursuit of trifles. Take time to reflect upon your condition and your prospects. Remember the God whom you have forgotten and neglected, whose Holiness you outrage, whose goodness you abuse. Remember Him, as ever near you, yea! even when He is farthest from your thoughts—when amid the bewildering rush and excitement of your mad festivity, you have totally forgotten Him. He is there, above, around, forever near, with His piercing eye to mark, and His hand to scourge and punish. Be still, and think of death, which so soon and so surely will come to you. Think how rapidly time is fleeting away. Think of the dread Judgment so swiftly and so surely coming. And oh! tell me, is such a life a fit preparation for death? is it a fit preparation for judgment? Are you ready for these inevitable events? Oh! say, had you stood beside that instrument of death and been swept away by its fiery breath and iron shower, where had you been *now?* Who among you would wish thus to have been summoned? Repent then, oh, repent, and "Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you." A worse thing! for what must be the eternity to which such a life inevitably leads?

> "Oh ye gay dreamers of gay dreams!
> How will ye weather an eternal night
> When such expedients fail!"

4. To those immediately concerned in this sad event, God hath spoken. They, of all others, cannot, methinks, doubt that it is the voice of the Lord to them. To those whose loved and cherished friends are thus taken from them, it has been indeed a voice of terror and anguish. To them, perhaps, this dispensation comes wrapt in deepest gloom, and as they ponder it, it may be hard to tell wherefore they have been afflicted, still harder to realise that there may yet be mercy in the blow. The bleeding hearts, crushed and stunned by the tremendous calamity, may be unable to hear anything but wrath and severity in the tones which summoned the loved ones so suddenly away.

But oh! could we reach them with our voice, how gladly would we endeavor to speak some little word of comfort. We would try to draw even from their calamity something to alleviate. We would tell them of our deep sympathy, the sympathy of the whole community, if that has a balm for sorrow such as theirs. But above all would we bid them hear God, in this calamity, saying to *them*, "Be still, and know that I am *God*." Yea! *God* whose name is *love*.—God, who doth not willingly grieve or afflict the children of men:—God, who chasteneth whom He loveth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. It is He who hath done this. And when He thus afflicts, He draws nigh in the fulness of his power and willingness to bless. He will bring good out of all this evil. He will heal the wound He has inflicted, He is able to supply the vacancy Himself hath created. He will be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow. Turn, then, unto Him, lay your bleeding and groaning hearts at His feet, and He will pour upon you the balm of His precious consolations. He will make this affliction "work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But there was mercy, much mercy mingled with this dread calamity. Of those who were most curious and eager to witness the experiments which terminated so fatally, several, by apparently the merest accident, were prevented from being present. Of those who were on board, a much smaller number were exposed to danger at the time of the catastrophe than at any previous firing. Of those who approached it, several, just before the gun was discharged, were by apparent trifles induced to step out of the range of its fragments. Of these, if we are not misinformed, were the President, the Secretary of War, and one of our own congregation. Several who stood near, though stunned, prostrated, or otherwise affected by the concussion, escaped without serious injury.

To these God hath spoken. To these He has addressed a message peculiarly touching and impressive. Ye "have heard of Him with the hearing of the ear, but now your eyes have seen Him." You have seen Him in His power and terribleness, and know what desolation He maketh among the children of men. You have seen the fearfulness of His might, the dreadfulness of His judgments. The terrors of the Lord have been vividly before you. Yet in the midst of

all He spared you. He covered you with a shield, and kept the missiles of death from you, that they touched you not. Oh! how great was His mercy towards you. How rich and how special His goodness to you! How deep and how special the gratitude it demands. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?" "The grave cannot praise thee, the dead cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living shall praise Thee: the father to the children shall make known Thy truth."

5. Finally, brethren beloved, this event is the voice of the Lord to us. It has a solemn admonition to us, followers of the Lord Jesus. It is an admonition directly in accordance with the tendency of our Lenten services, and the solemn rite we are about to celebrate. It is a rebuke to our worldly-mindedness, our longing after worldly pleasures and worldly honors. It bids us behold their emptiness and worthlessness. It asks, are these the things for which our hearts are tempted to turn back from religion's straight and narrow way? Are these the things for which we would sometimes forget our God, and prove false to our Saviour? Shall we be tempted hereafter, to barter for such miserable things, which so perish in the using, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, the joy and communion of the Holy Ghost? No, brethren, no: let us learn the lesson. We are strangers and pilgrims here, we have no continuing city, or abiding place. Nought here can satisfy us. Let us lift up our hearts above this miserable world. Let us at once "set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." Let us thirst only for the pleasures that are forevermore in his presence. Let us seek in sweet communion with Him, the joys which alone His favor gives. And remember that in Him, His love, His service, we have higher, holier, purer joys than the world has ever known. And warned by this event to be ready for the coming of the Lord. Let us "give all diligence" to be "found of Him in peace." Let us be "steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord." And may God add his blessing for Christ's sake—AMEN.

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